

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 have been examined. With this Amendment, Applicants add claims 12-14.

Claims 1-14 are all the claims pending in the application.

1. Formalities

Applicants request that the Examiner acknowledge the claim to foreign priority and confirm receipt of the certified copy of the priority document.

Applicants also request that the Examiner indicate whether the drawings filed on December 7, 2001, have been accepted.

Applicants thank the Examiner for initialing the references listed on form PTO-1449 submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on December 7, 2001.

2. Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kakigi *et al.* (US Patent Publication No.: 2002/0054350) ["Kakigi"]. For at least the following reason, Applicants traverse the rejection.

Because this application's priority date (December 19, 2000) predates Kakigi's filing date (July 20, 2001), Applicants submit that the Examiner may not rely on Kakigi. Applicants are hereby submitting a verified English translation of this application's priority document, JP 2000-385786, thereby perfecting priority.

3. New Claims

With this amendment, Applicants add claims 12-14. Applicants submit that these claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1, as well as the features set forth therein.

4. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

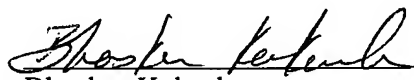
Respectfully submitted,

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